

From: Cliff Crouch
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/21/01 2:07am
Subject: Still accepting comments on the proposed Microsoft anti-trust case settlement?

Dear Dept. of Justice:

I subscribe to a daily email "Technology Update" from The Wall Street Journal. In today's issue, the WSJ.com editors write:

>Microsoft is set to settle scores of private antitrust cases that charge
>the company abused its Windows software monopoly. Under the settlement,
>Microsoft would provide software and computers to over 14,000 schools at
>an estimated cost of about \$1.1 billion.

Let me get this straight: Microsoft Corporation is tried and found guilty, in U.S. federal court, of being a monopoly that has deliberately engaged in illegal and abusive practices to achieve and maintain that monopoly status ... and then it is allowed to settle lawsuits against it by "providing software and computers" that will further entrench its monopoly status?

Has the legal world gone utterly barking mad?

I mean, although I'd like to believe otherwise, a small still voice tells me that these aren't Apple Macintosh computers, Linux-based software programs, UNIX operating systems, or even old BeBoxes that Microsoft plans to dump ... er, "provide" ... are they?

Don't you realize that even in providing "free" software to these schools (or other entities), Microsoft hooks them into the upgrade cycle? That it creates an environment where people will shy away from anything that's not compatible with the Microsoft Windows operating system? Don't you realize that if an anti-trust case settlement allows Microsoft to provide "free" software to schools, you are effectively shutting out the company's competitors? How can any other software maker -- for example, Apple Computer -- even *hope* to compete in, say, a school district, if Microsoft has already strategically placed "free" Intel-based computers running "free" Windows software throughout it? If you let this happen, you are *furthering* Microsoft in its monopoly, not hindering it.

Please do something meaningful to penalize Microsoft for its predatory behavior and to allow other companies to compete with it on a more even playing field.

Astonished, incredulous, & appalled
at my government's leniency toward this monopoly,
Cliff Crouch

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